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POLITICAL PARTIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

It is perhaps too early to discuss the character and extent in the Philippines of political parties as we understand the term. In the first place it must be said that of the eight or nine millions of people in the Philippines there are perhaps six or six and a half millions who are Christians, a million to a million and a half Moros, and the remainder non-Christian or pagan tribes, residing in the mountains of Mindanao, Negros and Luzon. The Moros and other non-Christian tribes have no political conception whatever except that of the absolute rule of some local chieftain. A possible exception might be made in favor of some of the Igorrotes of Benguet, Lepanto and Bontoc, for whom the Commission has already prepared in the case of Benguet, and are about to formulate in the case of Lepanto and Bontoc, a paternal form of government with rudiments of autonomy in the municipalities. Generally, however, when we speak of the Filipinos as a people, we refer to the Christian Filipinos, who for three hundred years have been Roman Catholics and subject to Christian influences. It is these for whom, in the opinion of the Commission, a gradually increasing popular government should be established, and it is in respect to them that what I have to say of the political parties in the Philippines applies. This body of Christian Filipinos, something more than six millions in number, is to be divided linguistically into perhaps a dozen tribes, of whom the Visayans, the Tagalogs, the Ilocanos and the Bicol are in the order of their number the most important. They are not tribes in the ordinary sense, for they do not maintain among themselves any tribal relation, but they speak different languages, and are unable to understand each other. They have a local feeling of pride in their towns and provinces, and there is growing among them a national or race interest. More than 90 per cent of them do not speak Spanish, and very much more than a majority of this 90 per cent do not read and write even their own dialect. They are very ignorant, very docile, very timid, very respectful of authority accompanied by any show of force at all, and are credulous to a degree that can hardly be understood in this country. Potentially they are a bright people, exceedingly imitative, with unde-

veloped artistic tastes. They are a courteous, hospitable, and, in many respects, a lovable people. They are not a licentious people, but they do not regard the marriage tie as essential to the decent living together of a man and a woman, provided that, during the time of cohabitation, the one is loyal to the other. Under the influences of the tropical sun they are not an energetic or industrious people, though I believe that organization can accomplish much in making the people a much more useful people for purposes of labor than under the recently unsettled conditions they have proved themselves to be. With the war passion they have developed cruelty, but in peaceful times they are a sweet-tempered people, decorous in their conduct. Their chief vice is that of gambling. They are a very temperate people, and one rarely sees a drunken Filipino, although I think they all more or less take a little vino, the distillation of the sap of the nipa palm. Among the ignorant 90 per cent there is very little political sentiment of any kind, except the desire for quiet, for protection from ladrones or other disturbers of the peace, and the feeling of deep hostility against the friars who represented to them the political condition of subjection under the Spanish rule and all its severity. Political conception, until the system of education shall have brought this 90 per cent into sympathy with modern ideas by giving them a common language, must be generally confined to less than 10 per cent who speak Spanish, and the discussion of political parties must be limited to that 10 per cent.

The only political party that is generally organized throughout the archipelago is the so-called Federal party. In the beginning of the revolution against Spain, in 1896, the educated Filipinos were divided into two parties,—the pro-Spanish party, which was comparatively small and consisted of those few Filipinos who had been admitted into association and intimacy with the Spaniards of the islands, and the remainder of the educated Filipinos, most of whom belonged to the Katipunan society, and were eager for an improvement of the conditions of the Filipino people, a more liberal government under the sovereignty of Spain, the exclusion of the friars from the islands and general reforms. They quickly became a revolutionary party, and embraced all the Filipinos of education, except a very few in Manila of property and standing and some in Cebú and Iloilo. The ending of the revolution by the so-called treaty of Biac-na-Bato and the withdrawal from the islands of the

half a dozen leaders of the revolution left conditions very much the same, because Spain and her representatives did nothing to better matters.

The coming of the Spanish war, the battle of Manila and the rousing of the Filipinos again to revolution against Spain continued the organization of the revolutionary party until General Merritt went into Manila and subsequently Aguinaldo formed his government. Aguinaldo called into the Malolos convention the ablest lawyers, doctors and other Filipinos in Manila and in Luzon. When the issue became squarely presented as to whether there was to be war between the United States and the revolutionary forces, many of those who had been with Aguinaldo at Malolos left him, and these thereafter constituted, though not organized, the Americanista element of the educated Filipinos. The more cultivated, the more conservative of the revolutionary leaders withdrew from the insurgent army and lived quietly in Manila. The insurgent generals were usually young, adventurous and intoxicated with the gold lace and arbitrary power of military life. As the war progressed, and after the defeat of the armies in the field, the revolutionary party became rapidly reduced in numbers, and was confined largely to the guerrillas in the mountains. The great majority of the educated and thinking people were in favor of peace. The uncertainty, however, which they felt during the canvass between Mr. McKinley and Mr. Bryan as to whether the success of Mr. Bryan would give complete control to those in arms against the United States prevented much public expression of the real sentiments of these persons toward the continuance of the war and the recognition of the sovereignty of the United States. When, however, the election resulted so overwhelmingly in the election of Mr. McKinley, there was then but little delay. The Federal party was organized, and, in the face of an apparent continuance of the guerrilla warfare in a great many of the provinces, the party gathered numbers and organization in a most wonderful way throughout the archipelago, and the chief plank in its platform as originally formed was that of peace under the sovereignty of the United States. The Federal party is the only party which has organized committees in every province of the archipelago and in all the important towns among the Christian Filipinos.

The Christian Filipinos are friendly to the United States;

have come to believe in the good intentions of the people of the United States; they recognize, and have been taught to recognize by the introduction of civil government the difference between military and civil methods, and have become convinced that, with the disappearance of war and the assumption of complete power by the civil government, the treatment which the Filipinos will receive will be all that they desire. They have been lead to believe this from the autonomous character of the government allowed them in municipalities, from a partially autonomous government in the provinces, and from the introduction into the Commission of three Filipino commissioners. They have filed a petition in Congress, in which they ask for a declaration from that body that they may be formed as a territory and ultimately become a State. While that is now one of the prominent planks in the platform, it should be said that, while there was an indefinite or ambiguous reference to it in the original platform of the party, it did not form its chief object, which was that of securing peace under the sovereignty of the United States. This is manifest from the fact that, after the insurrection had ceased in all the provinces but the four in which during the last six months it had been active, to wit, Batangas, Laguna, Tayabas and Samar, the leaders of the party were sincerely considering the question whether it would not be wise to break up the organization now that peace had been brought about in all the provinces in which they could exercise influence, and allow the various elements in the party to divide on other issues. In view, however, of the fact that the insurrection still existed in three or four of the provinces, and of the further fact that a majority were anxious to influence Congress to grant as much popular control to the Filipino people as it could, the party retained its organization and formulated the memorial or petition to Congress, which has already been presented.

There were engaged in the formation of the Federal party some gentlemen sincerely in favor of securing peace, but who desired also to secure independence by peaceful methods. They have been regarded as irreconcilable up to the time that they joined the Federal party, and these gentlemen have now, without formally severing their relation with the Federal party, formed what is called the Peace party in the city of Manila. They have no organiza-

tion outside of the city of Manila, and are at present comparatively few in number.

In addition to this party there is a party called the Conservative party, which is made up chiefly of the Filipinos who sympathized more or less with Spain in the two revolutions, and who have some pro-clerical proclivities. They have considerable wealth, and have a newspaper, which is their organ, edited by a Spaniard, and are much more prominent from a Manila standpoint than they are important as representing any extended public opinion in the archipelago. The Spanish public opinion is almost confined to Manila, and the Spaniards and the Conservative party are strongly sympathetic in their hostility to the leaders of the Federal party and their denunciation of them. There are some of the Filipinos who have given a good deal of study to the Constitution of the United States, and they are to be found chiefly among the Federal party leaders, and possibly there should be included in this number a few of the revolutionary leaders and irreconcilables. Their whole education has been in the civil law and in the conceptions of civil government and of liberty which prevail in France and among the so-called republicans or social democrats of other European countries. They have very little practical conception of individual liberty as it has been hammered out in Anglo-Saxon countries by hundreds of years of conflict. In spite of eloquent tributes to liberty and freedom, even the most advanced and practical of the Filipino party leaders find it difficult to regard with favor limitations of the executive in favor of the liberty of the individual when the right man is in the executive. The tendency among them is always toward absolutism in the president of the town, in the governor of the province, and in the representative of the central government.

It is most difficult for them to conceive of a ruling majority treating the minority with the same rights as those enjoyed by the majority. On the other hand, the minority are, as President Wheeler aptly expressed it in remarks made by him in San Francisco some time since, "bad losers," and the defeat in an election is only a preliminary to violence and revolution. It is the idea of practical individual liberty which the Filipinos are to learn,—the practical elements of popular government. In the opinion of the Commission, a knowledge of free civil government and its working is not

implanted in the human mind, but must be acquired by example and experience of years. The Commission has recommended the establishment of a popular assembly, which, with an appointed upper legislative body, shall constitute the government of the islands. The qualifications of the electorate are, first, a knowledge of Spanish or English; second, the having been an officer of a municipality in the Spanish times, and so one of the *principales* of the town, or the payment of fifteen dollars a year taxes. If this recommendation of the Commission is followed, as the House Committee on Insular Affairs has recommended that it should be, then will come the division into parties of these popular representatives.¹ Many express the fear that the first election or two will show obstructionists in the majority. I do not think so. The elections for governors, held in February, have been most satisfactory to those who framed the system. There were elected four Americans as governors, and the remainder, twenty-six or twenty-seven, were Filipinos, nearly all of whom were members of the Federal party, and were, with two or three exceptions, the persons whom the Commission nominated for temporary governors. The electing bodies were the municipal councillors and vice-presidents of the municipalities in the province, who met in convention. The municipal councillors and vice-presidents had been elected under the municipal code in the previous December. The elections were all orderly; there were no charges of fraud, except in the cases of Bataan and Surigao and one other province, the name of which escapes me, in which new elections were ordered and duly had. A great deal of interest was taken in the elections.

WILLIAM H. TAFT.

Governor of the Philippine Islands.

¹ The paper was written before Congress passed the act for the civil government of the Philippine Islands, but it did not reach the Academy in time for insertion in the May ANNALS, which was devoted to a discussion of the government of dependencies.—EDITOR.